

Testimony of Tiffany Hubbard

To the Government Administration and Elections Committee

Regarding S.B. 1144

March 23, 2009

Thank you for this opportunity to speak in support of Senate Bill 1144, an important workplace flexibility initiative for the State of Connecticut. My name is Tiffany Hubbard, I am a UConn Law student and the author of the report Redefining Retirement Years: Workplace Flexibility Practices & State Law. I do not intend to read the report here today, but I am happy to answer any questions you may have concerning my research.

In March, 2008, I became involved with the Commission on Aging's Redefining Retirement Years project through my elder law professor, Sandra Sherlock-White, who offered the opportunity as a class paper topic. In the fall of 2008, I continued my research efforts for the Commission as an independent research project, under Professor Sherlock-White's guidance, focusing on workplace flexibility practices in the private sector and other states' workplace flexibility laws.

The report is based on a review of the laws of all fifty states with respect to workplace flexibility. It was completed in January, 2009 and is the culmination of my research efforts on behalf of the Commission on Aging. I would like to take this time to highlight the report findings.

Strikingly, both private and public sector employers found that workplace flexibility improved employee productivity and job satisfaction, reduced absenteeism, reduced employee turnover, and reduced costs. Some private sector employers have

found a positive correlation between workplace flexibility and customer retention and profits, while others have found a decrease in health care expenditures, including mental health.

States have enacted workplace flexibility laws to achieve a variety of objectives: to promote broader recruitment, to improve productivity or services; and/or to reduce environmental pollution and traffic congestion. Some states have experienced reduced real estate costs through employee telecommuting and the use of a virtual "office." The demonstrated success in the private sector and in other states with workplace flexibility statutes should serve as sound footing for Connecticut to expand its workplace flexibility laws, allowing the state to foster flexibility while maintaining or increasing its service level.

Senate Bill 1144 provides Connecticut with four workplace flexibility tools: voluntary schedule reduction; flexible work schedules; phased-in retirement; and telecommuting. Under Senate Bill 1144, Connecticut has an opportunity to build on its existing laws to promote workplace flexibility as a recruiting and retention tool, and to lead by example as the state's largest employer. At the same time, the state could realize cost savings by decreasing employee absenteeism, presenteeism, and turnover, reducing health care costs, and increasing employee productivity and customer service. This opportunity is especially crucial when the state not only is facing an aging workforce, but a budget crisis. I urge you to support Senate Bill 1144.

Thank you for again for the opportunity to speak today, and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have concerning my research.